

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION

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June 27, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER  
FROM: JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *WJH*  
SUBJECT: Indochina Control Maps

ARMY review completed.

Mr. Helms has sent you a CIA Intelligence Memorandum entitled "Maps of Communist-Dominated Areas of Indochina: Their Limitations and Relevance to a Cease-fire." (Tab 2)

Attached to the memorandum are maps of Indochina and of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam depicting areas dominated, on June 6, 1972, by the Communists and those dominated by friendly governments. These areas are broken down into five categories:

-- Direct enemy military influence depicted by red circles where enemy main force infantry units are concentrated (except for Chinese forces in Laos);

-- Predominant Communist influence, where the Communists have a significant military or administrative presence or both and the friendly government does not;

-- Predominant friendly influence, where the situation is the exact reverse of that above;

-- Contested, where neither side has a clearly superior military force or administrative apparatus in the area;

-- Neither dominated nor seriously contested by either side, where neither side has a significant military or administrative presence.

The map of South Vietnam indicates that nearly half of the territory is either Communist-controlled or contested, with GVN control confined to the coast, southern MR-3 and northern and southeastern MR-4. The maps of Laos and Cambodia indicate that about three-fourths of these countries are under Communist control.

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Limitations

The memorandum lists the following general limitations of these maps in formulating cease-fire provisions:

-- Because of the fluid military situation, maps may depict divisions of territory which could be untenable after a cease-fire was declared.

-- The maps tend to equate military occupation of an area with control of the area. This might not be accurate in a cease-fire situation.

-- Control of territory and control of people are two quite different matters, as seen by the recent flow of refugees to GVN-controlled territory.

-- The scale of the maps is too small to accurately show the true situation on the ground which usually more closely resembles a leopard-spot situation which, in turn, would be difficult to resolve in a cease-fire agreement.

In conclusion, the memorandum points out that the enemy's influence in much of the area described as being under his control, has not been tested. This can also be said of GVN pacification gains. Many of the enemy's territorial gains may be fragile and temporary because he lacks adequate local administrative structures.

Mr. Helms, in his covering memorandum to you (Tab A), cautions that these maps were not designed as a negotiating tool and do not give the GVN the benefit of any doubt. He adds: "In any actual negotiating situation, we could prepare a rather different but eminently defensible set to support an allied bargaining position, particularly an opening position."

Comment. I believe these maps would have been considerably enhanced by overlays showing population concentrations and changes in the control situation since the offensive began. In addition, it would also be helpful to show areas of direct GVN military influence. There should also probably be more white areas on the maps. In much of the shaded areas -- especially those showing Communist control -- there are neither friends nor foes.

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

21 June 1972

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

**SUBJECT :** Indochina Control Maps

1. Attached is a set of maps illustrating one approach to depicting territorial control in Indochina, together with a memorandum explaining the concepts employed and some of their inevitable limitations in light of the inherent complexity of the problems involved. These maps were developed in consultation with Mr. Sullivan. (We also dragooned Mr. Colby into this exercise to exploit his background and knowledge.)

2. Recipients of this package will have a natural tendency to focus on the maps and not the accompanying memorandum of explanation. At this state, any such tendencies should be resisted. Unless viewed in the context established by that memorandum, the maps run the risk of being misleading.

3. The maps are developed from a 6 June data base. They should, therefore, be considered as illustrating a method of approaching the problem you posed, not as a definitive summary of the current situation. If the approach is deemed sound, more current versions could of course be prepared, keyed to a different base date. No matter what date any such maps are keyed to, however, they will have at least two dimensions of inevitable distortion. First, a cartographer's need to draw lines will unavoidably convey an impression of the tidy delineation and precise demarcation that does violence to the messy, overlapping confusion of the real situation. Second, the tidy lines of any map inevitably suggests a degree of precision and completeness in our data base that does not exist and is never likely to be achieved.

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4. Finally, these maps are designed to illustrate a technique for depicting our best estimate of how things actually stand. They were not designed as a negotiating tool. In any actual negotiating situation, we could prepare a rather different but eminently defensible set to support an allied bargaining position, particularly an opening position. The attached maps make no effort to give the GVN the benefit of any doubt, whereas an actual negotiating set would clearly be developed under somewhat different criteria.



Richard Helms  
Director

#### Attachments

#### Copies to:

Under Secretary Johnson  
Mr. Sullivan  
Deputy Secretary Rush  
Mr. Nutter  
Admiral Moorer



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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Maps of Communist-Dominated Areas of Indochina:  
Their Limitations and Relevance to a Cease-fire*

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21 June 1972  
No. 2046/72

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
21 June 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MAPS OF COMMUNIST-DOMINATED AREAS OF INDOCHINA:  
THEIR LIMITATIONS AND RELEVANCE TO A CEASE-FIRE

1. The four maps accompanying this memorandum are intended to depict, as of 6 June 1972, those areas of Indochina dominated by the Communists and those areas dominated by governments friendly to the US. The first map shows the areas of direct Communist military presence in Indochina as a whole. The other three are separate maps of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos--and each attempts to show the areas of predominant Communist or friendly influence in more detail than does the overall Indochina map.

2. We have divided the territory of Indochina into five categories on the maps, according to the following criteria:

- (a) Direct Enemy Military Influence:  
These are areas, depicted by red circles on the maps, where enemy main force (i.e., NVA) infantry units are concentrated.\* The larger circles have a fifteen-mile radius, and are centered on the location of the headquarters of each enemy main force division, as of the date of the map. The smaller circles have a five-mile radius and are centered on the headquarters of

*\*None of the Chinese units in northern Laos are shown, nor do these illustrative maps show those enemy units which are protecting the trails in lower Laos.*

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each "independent" enemy main force regiment--i.e., those regiments which are not subordinate to one of the divisions depicted by the larger circles. The size of the circles was derived by establishing the minimum radius which would encompass the operating regiments of each division and the operating battalions of each independent regiment. The employment of the circles and their dimensions are obviously fairly arbitrary techniques of depiction. These circles are not intended to provide tactical information about the specific areas of operation of each major enemy unit. Frequently, one or more regiments of a division will operate at a distance considerably greater than fifteen miles from its divisional headquarters. Nevertheless, these circles do show in general terms the concentration of NVA main force infantry units, and they do show the areas of Indochina where the impact of the current military offensive is being felt the most. The overall map of Indochina shows only these circles, and does not depict other areas of lesser Communist influence, which are contained in the individual country maps.

- (b) Predominant Communist Influence: These are areas where the Communists have a significant military and/or administrative presence and the friendly government does not. There may be occasional armed clashes in these areas but, as of the given date, Communist domination is not seriously threatened. In the Communist-controlled parts of Laos and Cambodia, armed clashes are infrequent although friendly patrols may

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quite regularly gather intelligence and conduct clandestine operations.

- (c) Predominant Friendly Influence: These are areas where the friendly government has a significant military and/or administrative presence and the Communists do not. Again, there may be occasional armed clashes, but friendly domination is not seriously threatened. It should be noted, however, that the criteria for friendly control tend to be more stringent than for Communist control, primarily because we have more information about the shortcomings of friendly control than we do of enemy control.
- (d) Contested: Territory is considered contested if neither side has a clearly superior military force or administrative apparatus in the area. In most contested areas, both sides are present in some strength and clash frequently. We have also included in our definition, however, some areas in which both sides have few forces and do not exert much military effort to exclude each other. "Contested" territory thus includes such disparate areas as the current battleground to the north and west of Hue, and parts of Cambodia where most of the "contest" consists of a competition between the two sides to extort more goods, services, and taxes from the local populations.
- (e) Neither dominated nor seriously contested by either side: This is territory where there are practically no permanent enemy or friendly forces, practically no administrative apparatus of either side, and not much

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interest on the part of either in establishing a permanent presence. In some cases, of course, such territory is used by one side or the other--or both--as a passage route for the transport of supplies and reinforcements. Most earlier maps have put such territory into the "contested" category, thus creating an impression of military or political confrontation over far wider areas of Indochina than is in fact the case. In South Vietnam, for example, areas which we have placed in this category have no significant GVN regional, popular or police forces in local villages and hamlets. They also do not have hamlet or village governments which are responsive, in a meaningful way, to GVN provincial administrations. At the same time, there are no significant enemy forces in these areas either.

3. It is important to note that all maps of this type have certain built-in limitations in terms of their value as tools to assist in formulating possible provisions of a cease-fire agreement. The principal limitations are as follows:

- (a) The maps at best can depict the control situation only at a given instant in time. In a fluid military situation where tactical control of areas is constantly changing, the maps may well depict divisions of territory which could be politically, militarily or economically untenable after a cease-fire was declared, or even after the pace of military activity slackened.
- (b) The maps of necessity tend to equate military occupation of an area with control of the area. Yet there can

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be a substantial difference between occupying an area and controlling it. Under reasonably stable conditions, information systems such as the HES can be devised to measure "control" in a fairly meaningful fashion. During a major military offensive, however, the measurement of control is increasingly dominated by military deployment and battle results. This is adequate to portray territorial control in the tactical situation, but such maps cannot portray with fidelity the degree of control which each side would have in certain areas in a cease-fire environment.

- (c) A most important consideration affecting all such maps is the fact that, in Indochina, control of territory and control of people are two quite different matters. For example, the enemy's territorial gains resulting from his present offensive are not matched, in any immediate sense, by populations gains. The present flow of refugees to the GVN side testifies to this. The fact that most of the population has preferred not to remain in areas occupied by the NVA, however, would create new problems for both sides if there were a cease-fire. GVN-controlled urban centers presently crowded with refugees might become an economic liability if, under the cease-fire, the surrounding rural and food producing areas were left under enemy control. Conversely, from the North Vietnamese standpoint, a cease-fire might leave Hanoi's forces with certain areas of limited value in terms of political control because they had been largely de-populated.

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- (d) The attached maps also have an inherent limitation of scale--the scale is so small that information cannot be presented in sufficient detail. In many areas of South Vietnam it would be impossible--even if we had the necessary information--to depict the degree of control which each side now exerts in particular provinces or districts, without developing individual maps of each province and in some cases each district. In brief, we are faced with the old leopard-spot problem, and there are areas of South Vietnam where at present the numbers of spots, and their pattern, cannot be depicted on one country-size map. This also means, of course, that a control situation exists which would be exceedingly difficult to resolve in a cease-fire agreement.

4. A final general comment: Much of the territory in South Vietnam currently under Communist influence is largely devoid of population or--at best--thinly populated. Also, in much of the South Vietnamese territory which appears on our maps as being under Communist influence, the degree of influence which the enemy actually possesses has not been tested. (The same used to be said, with some justification, of GVN pacification gains.) Many of the North Vietnamese divisions now operating in South Vietnam are doing so without the benefit of a strong local organization, and their success in developing a local administrative structure remains to be seen. Many of the enemy's recent territorial gains which are shown on the map of South Vietnam may be as fragile and temporary as any ever depicted on a pacification map.

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

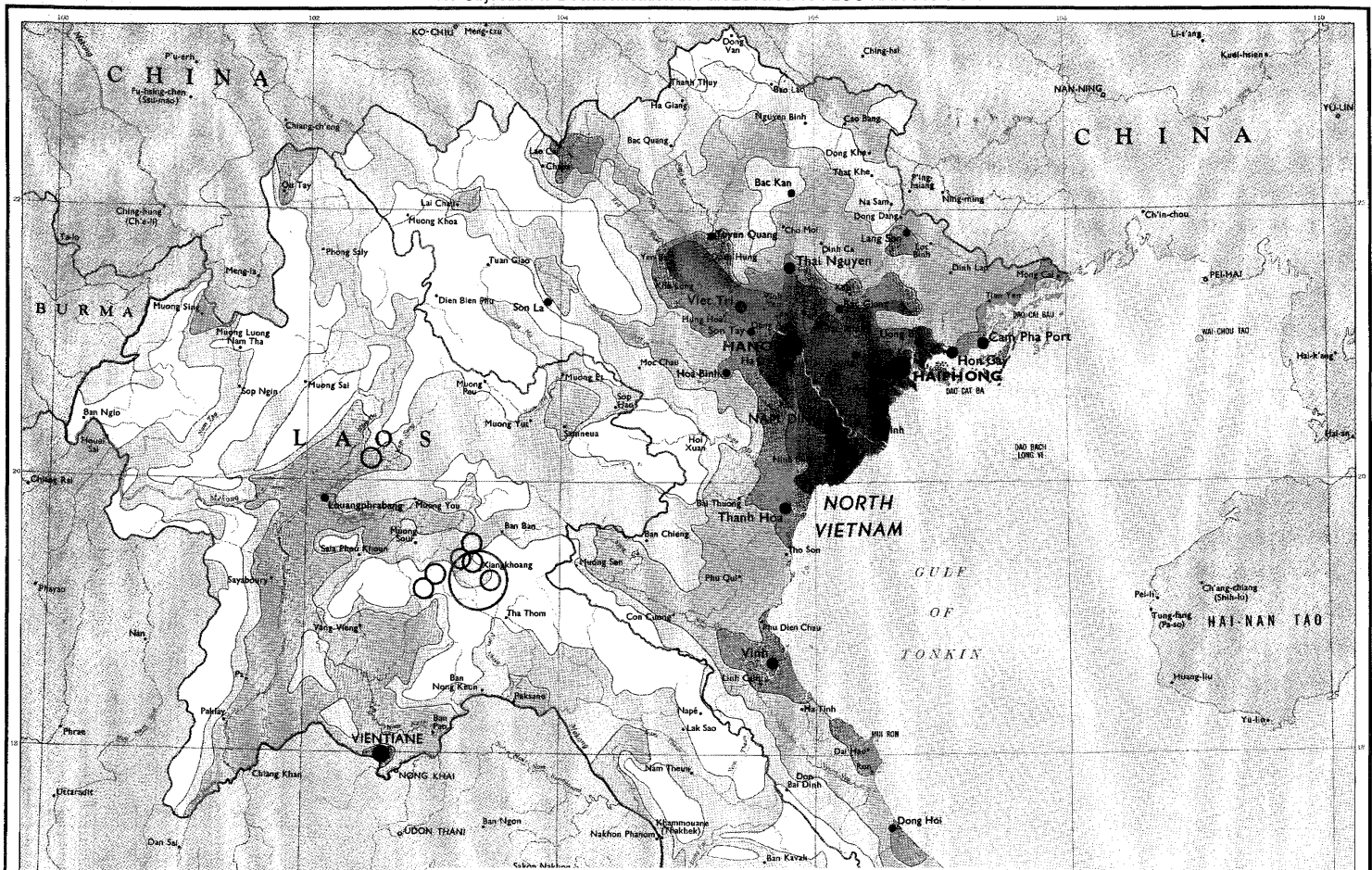
1. Map of Indochina: Areas of Direct Communist Military Influence as of 6 June 1972
2. Map of South Vietnam: Territorial Control as of 6 June 1972
3. Map of Cambodia: Territorial Control as of 6 June 1972
4. Map of Laos: Territorial Control as of 6 June 1972

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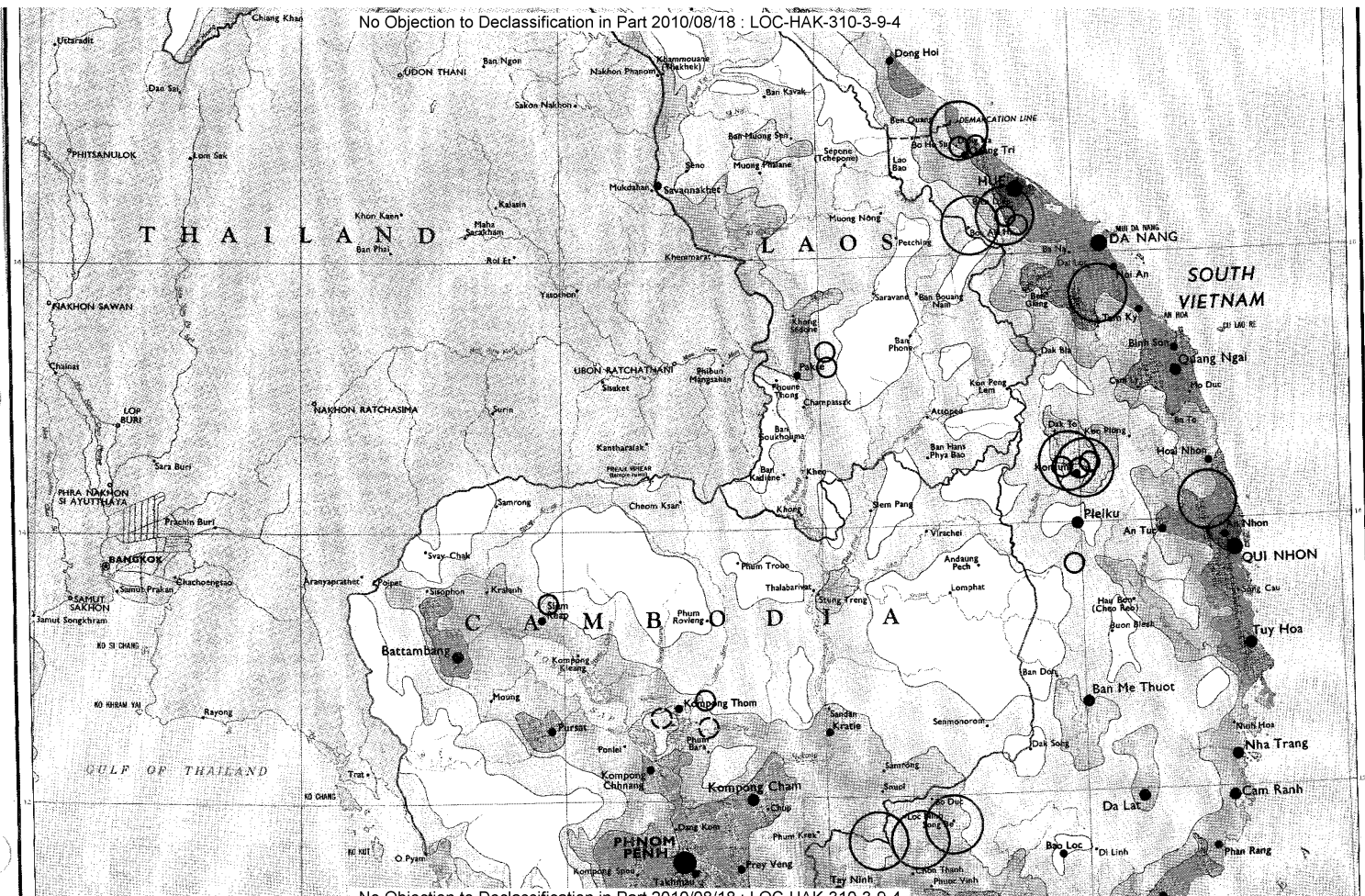
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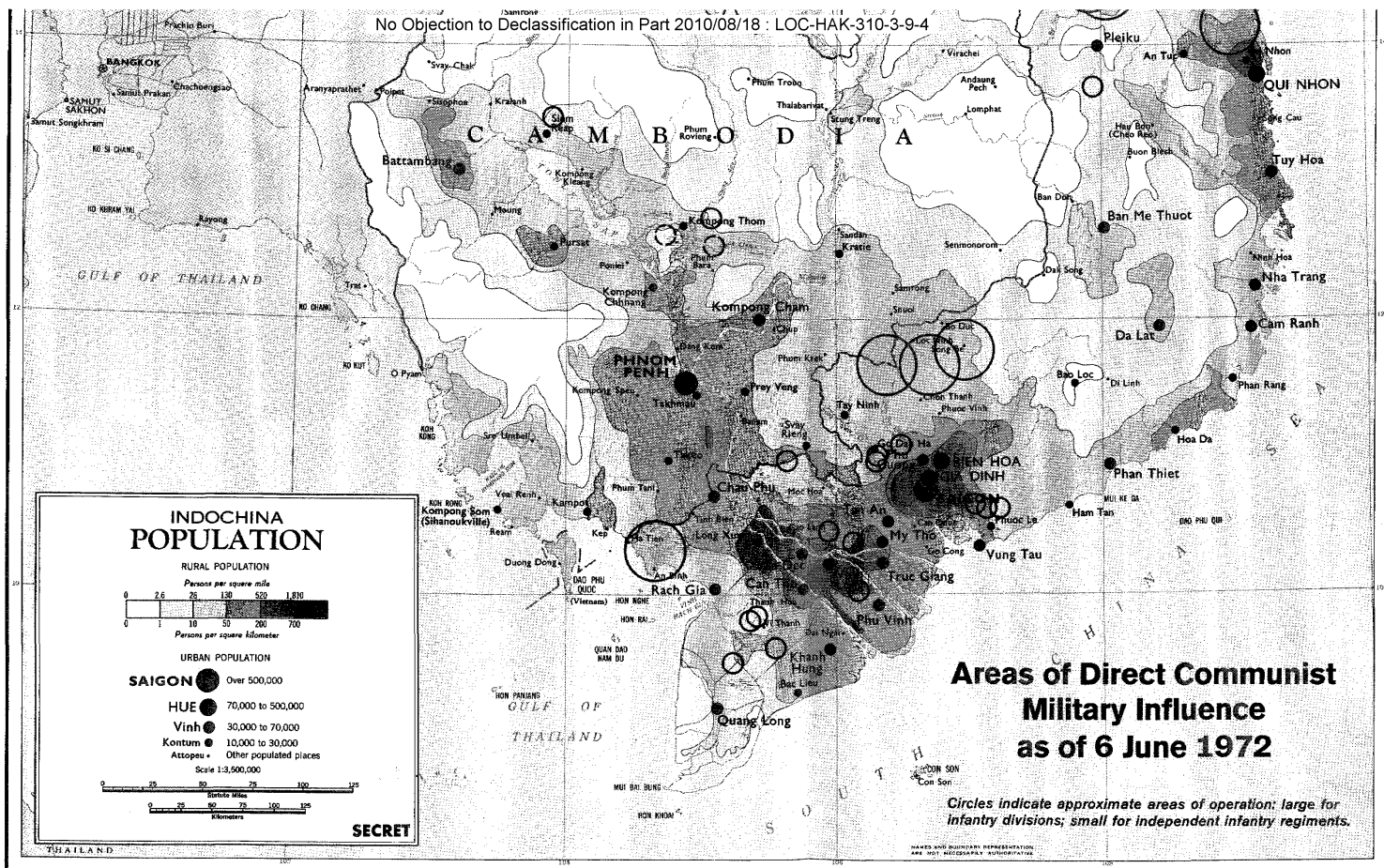


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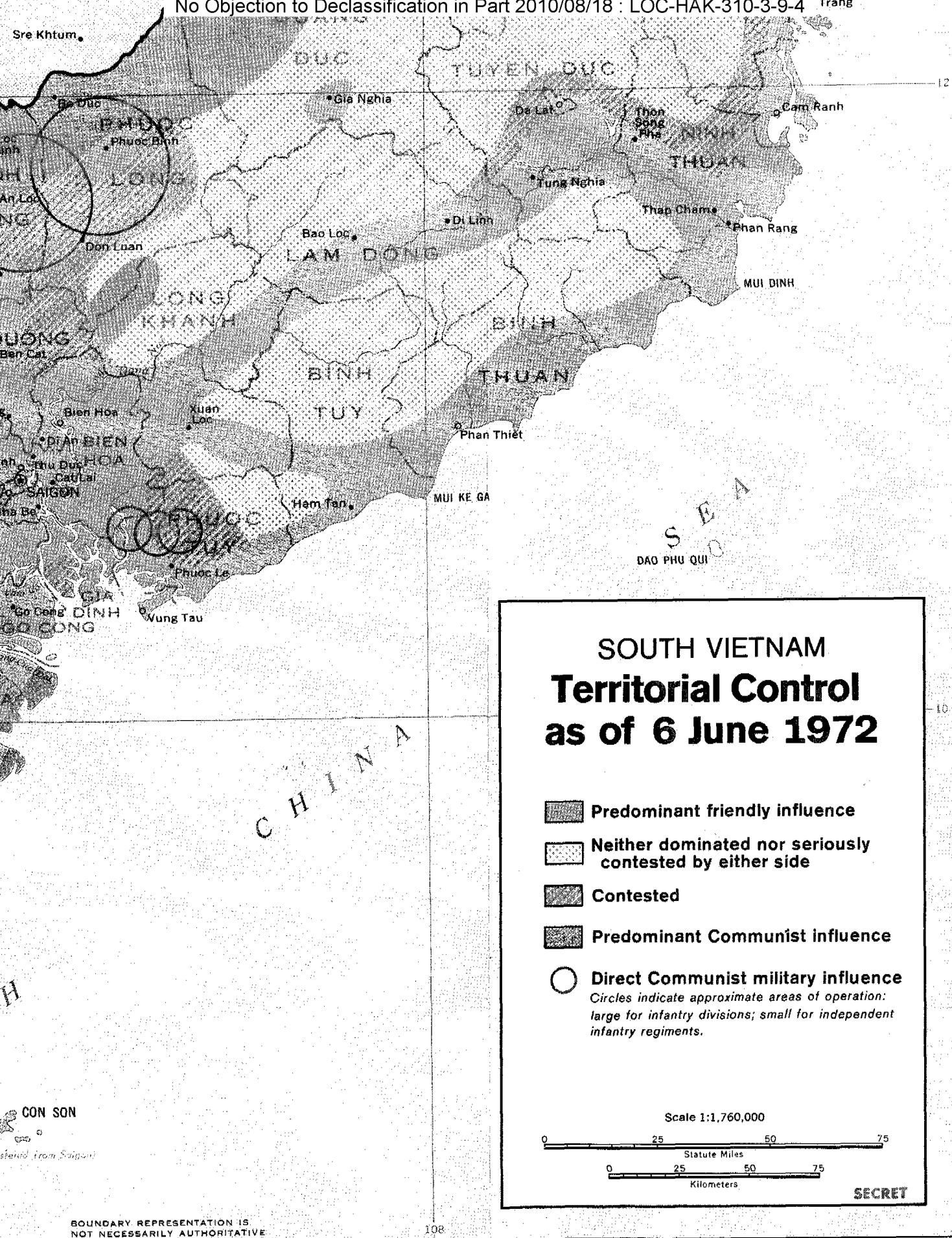












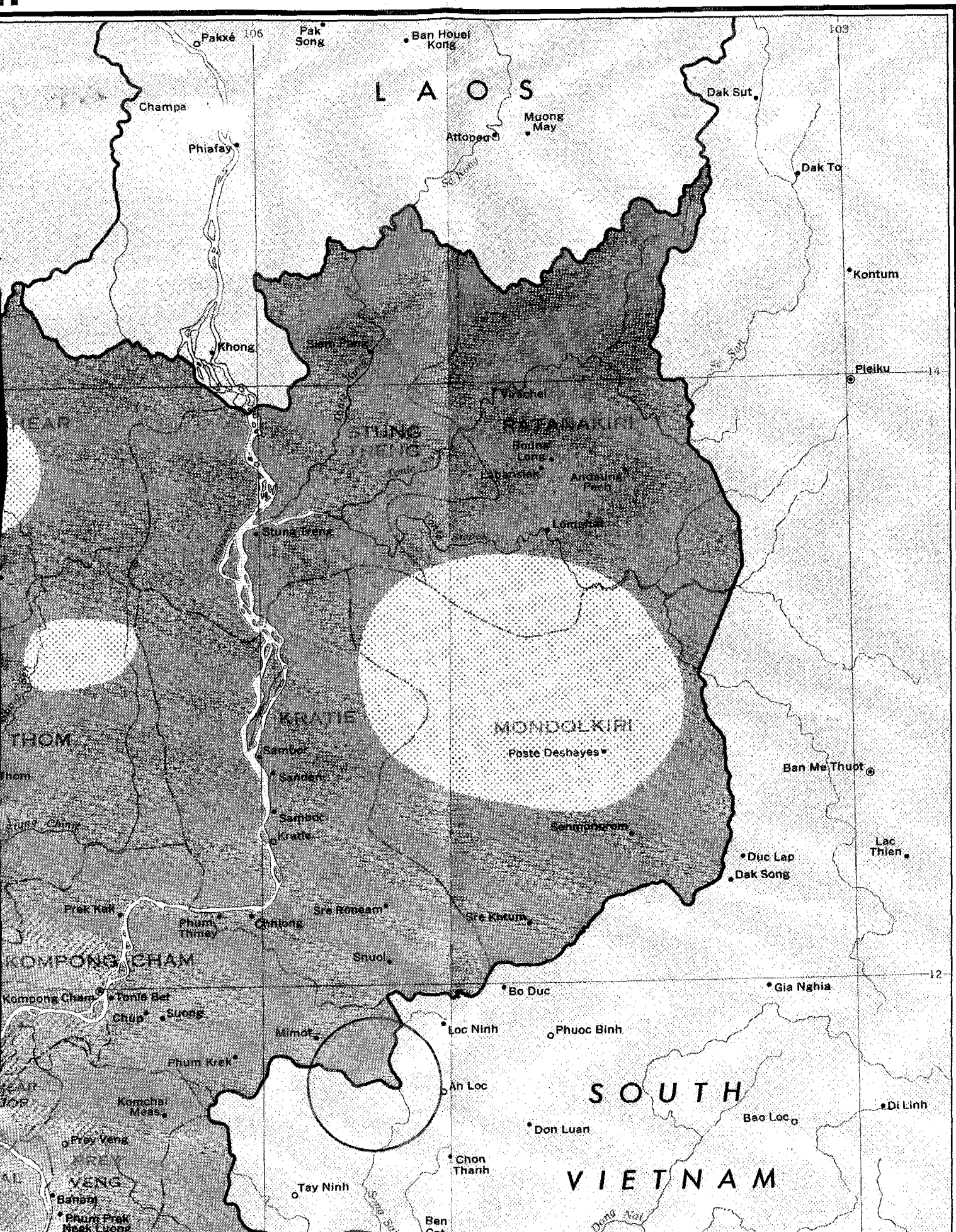
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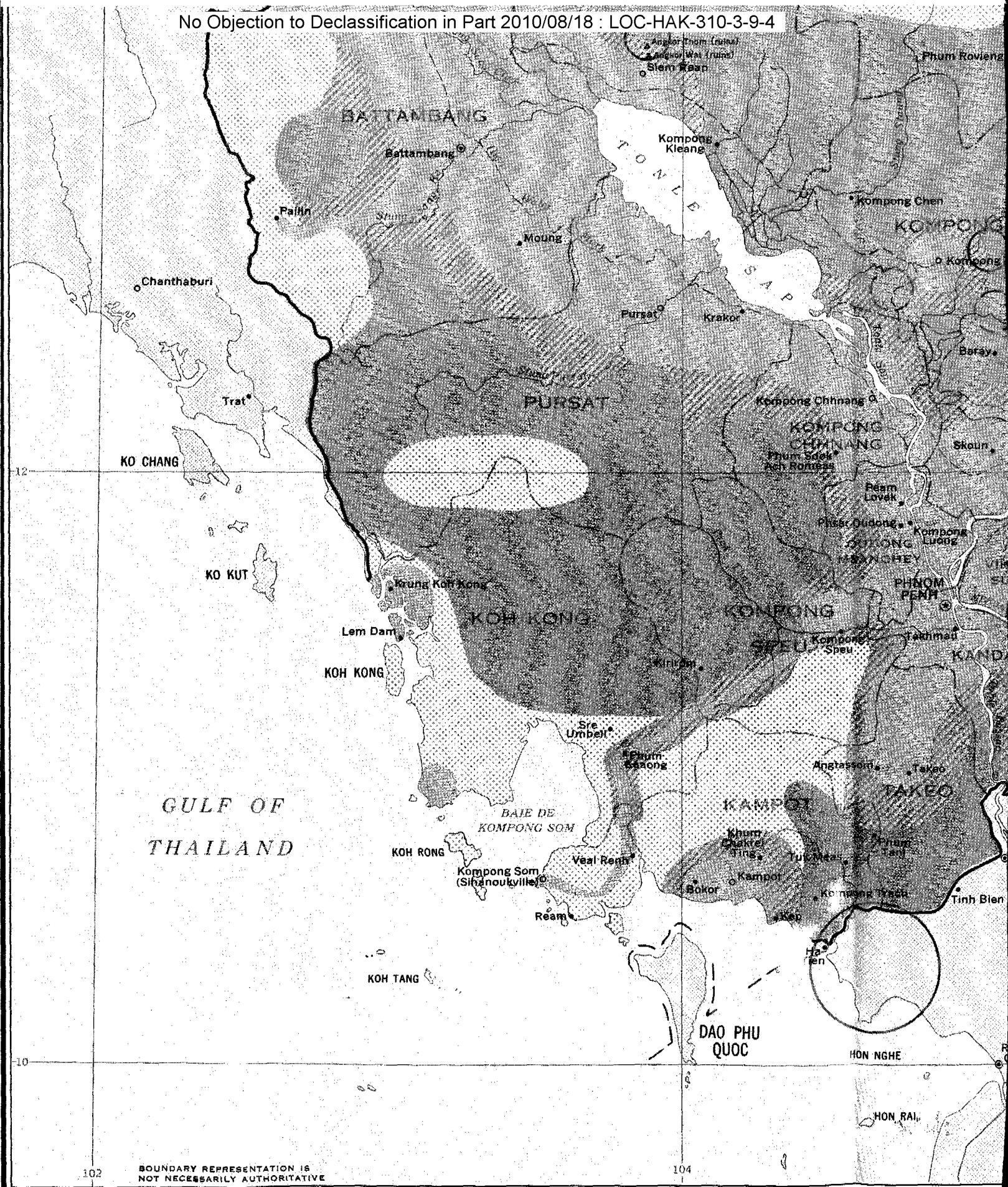
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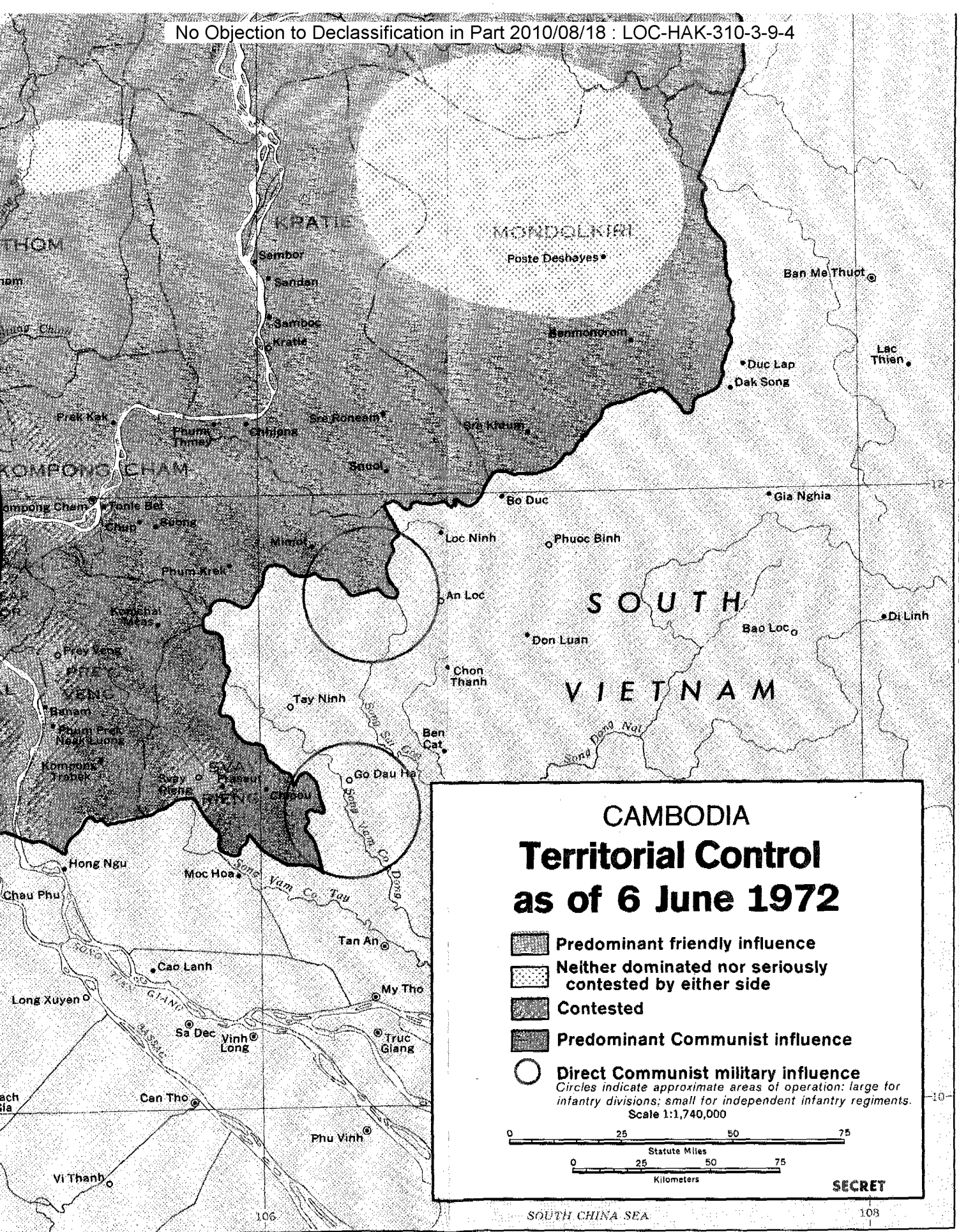


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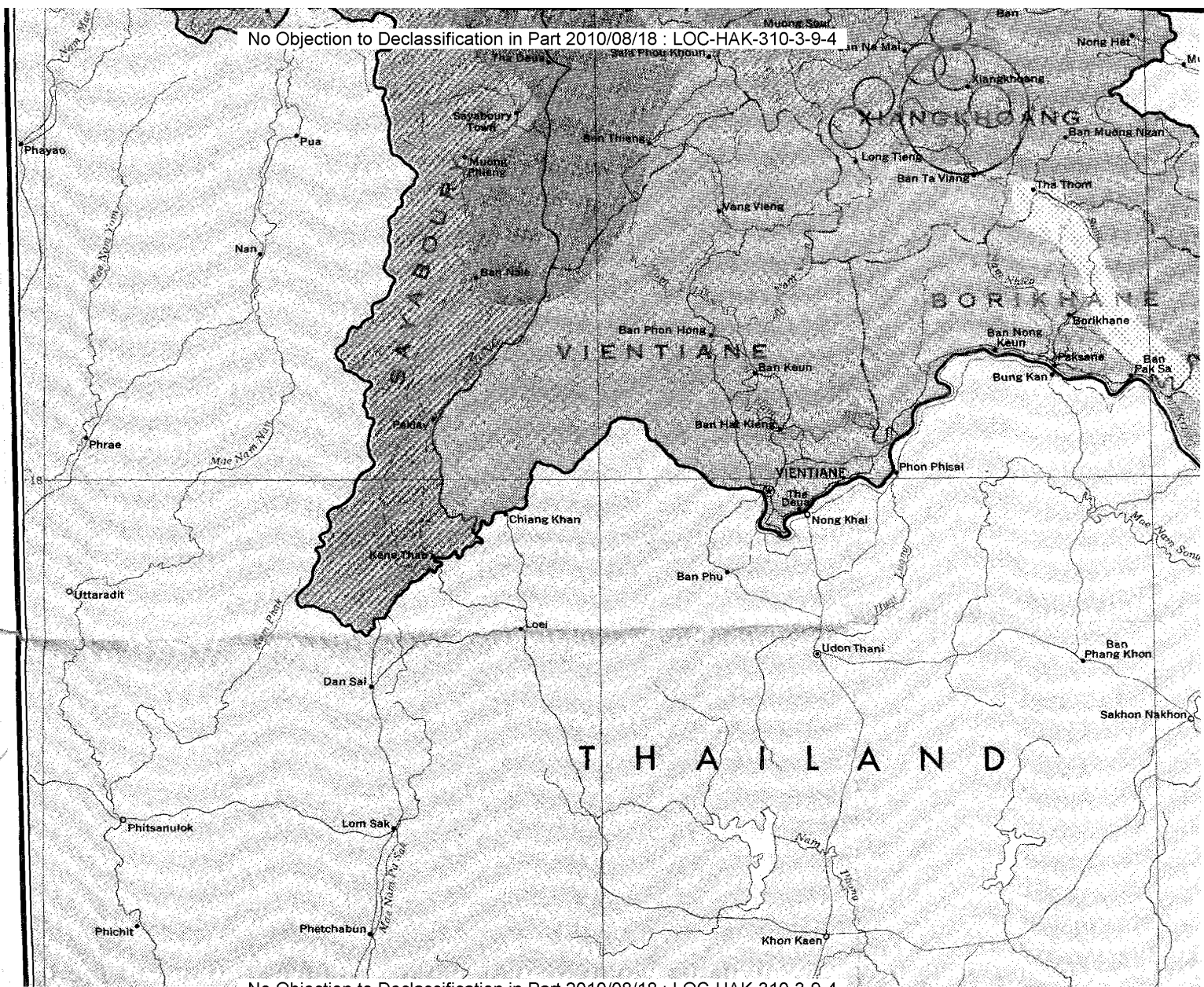
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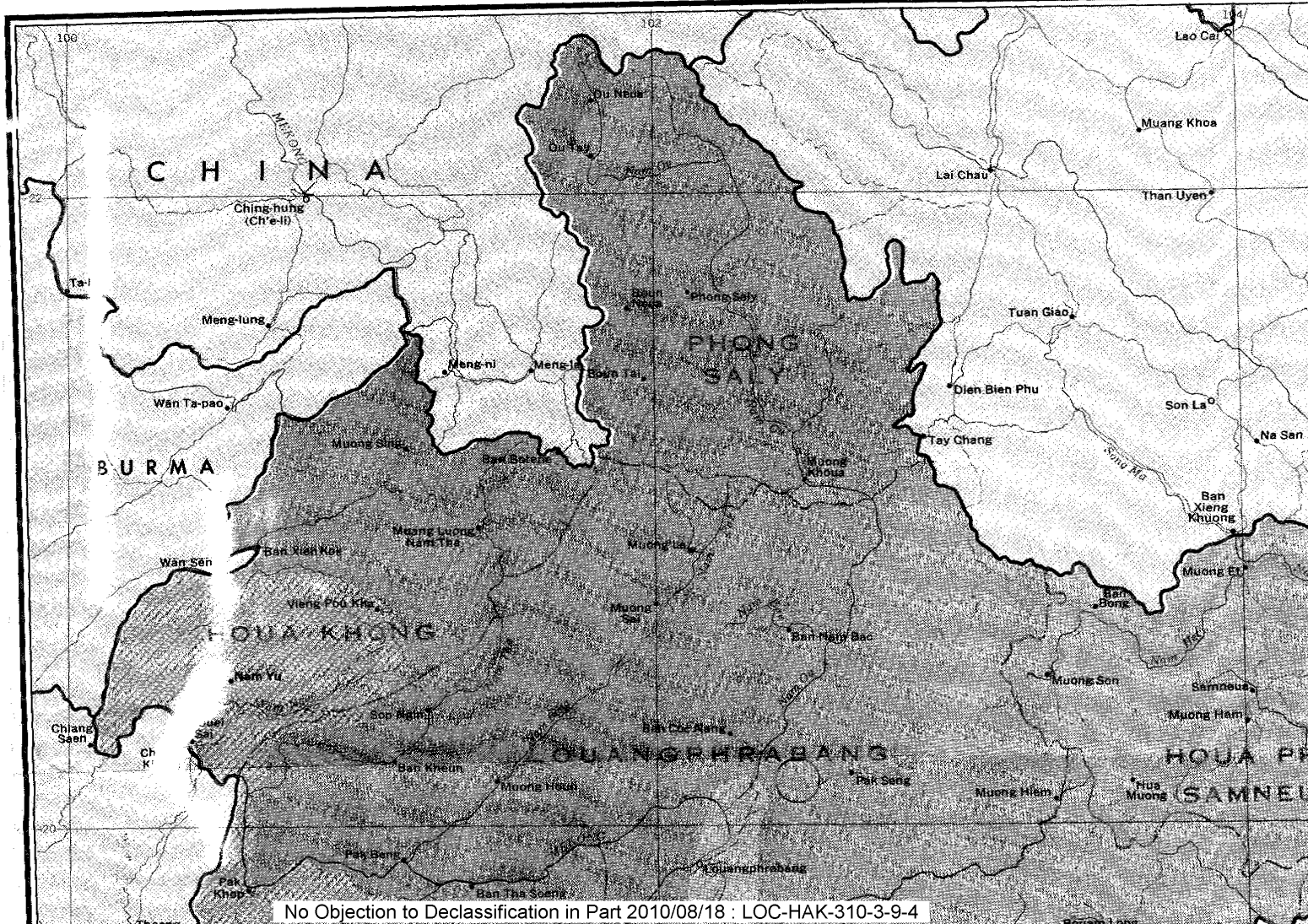


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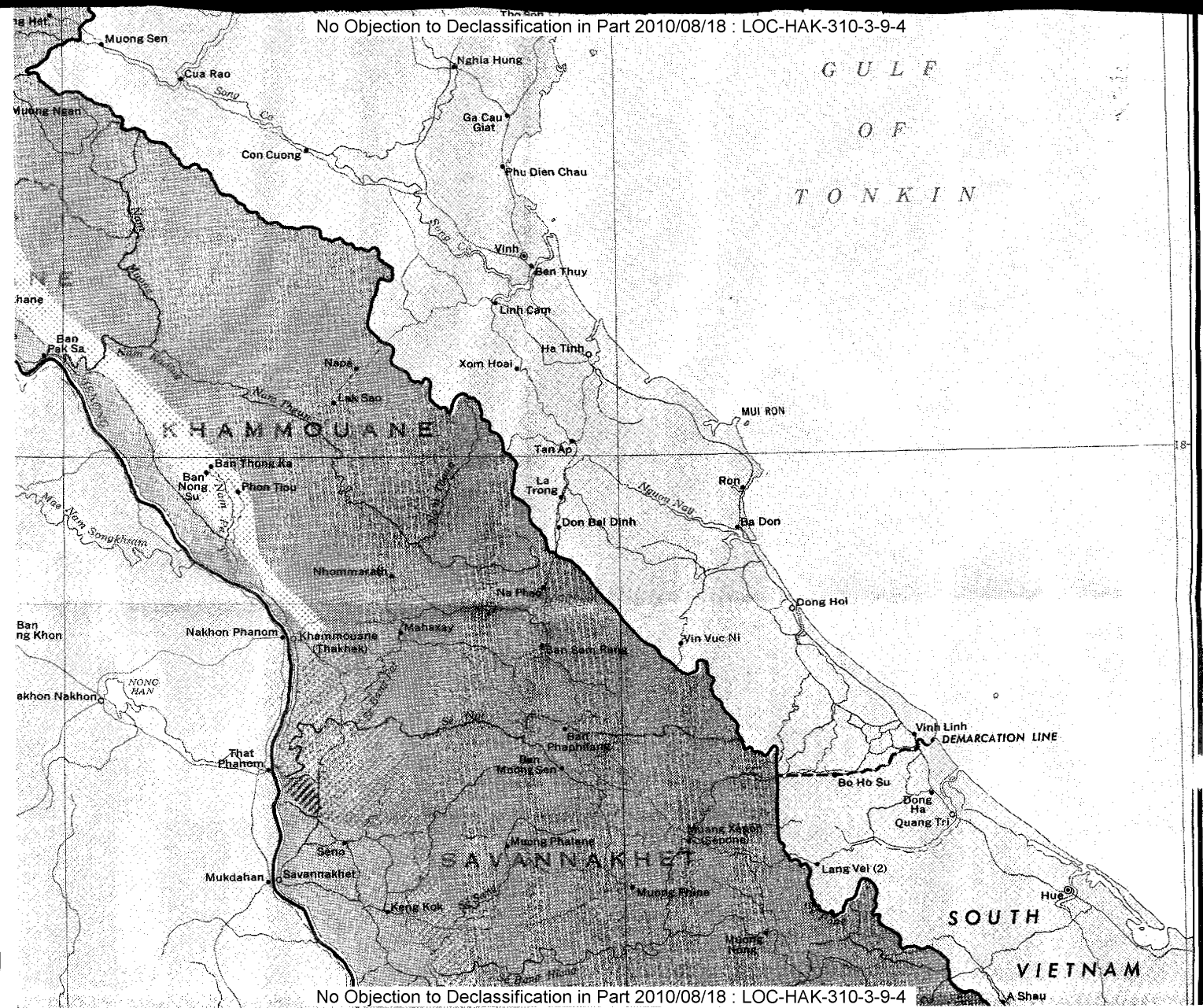
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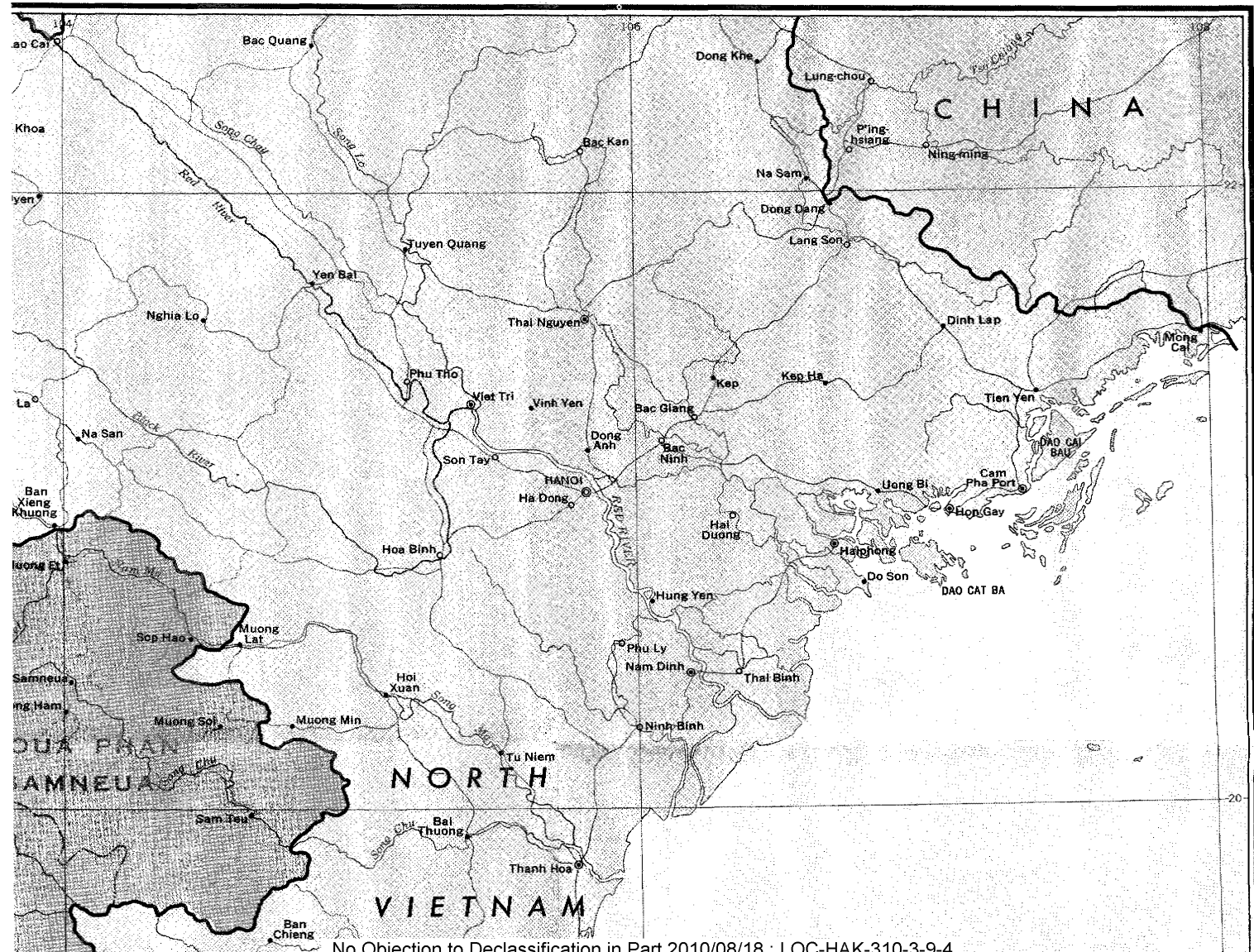


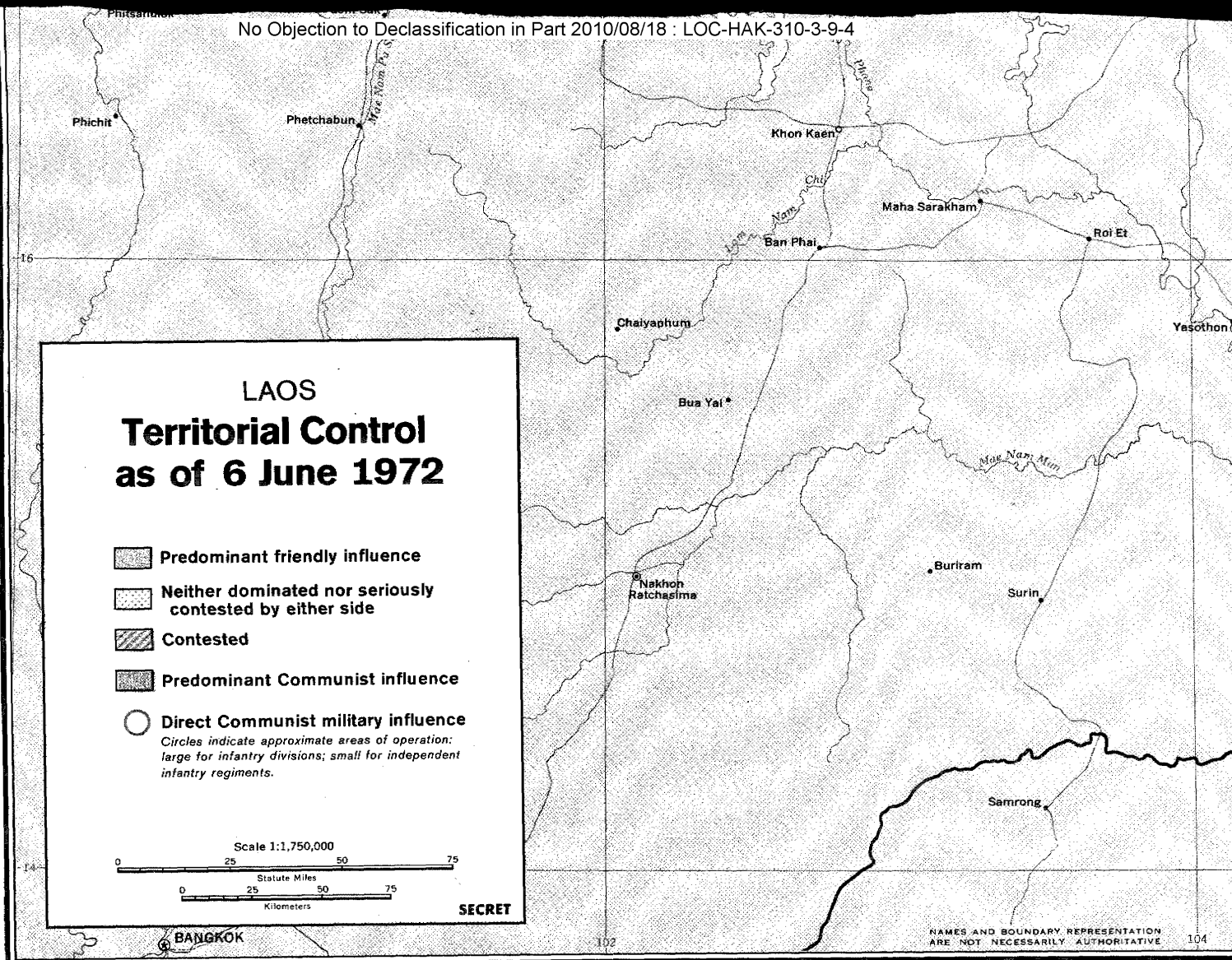
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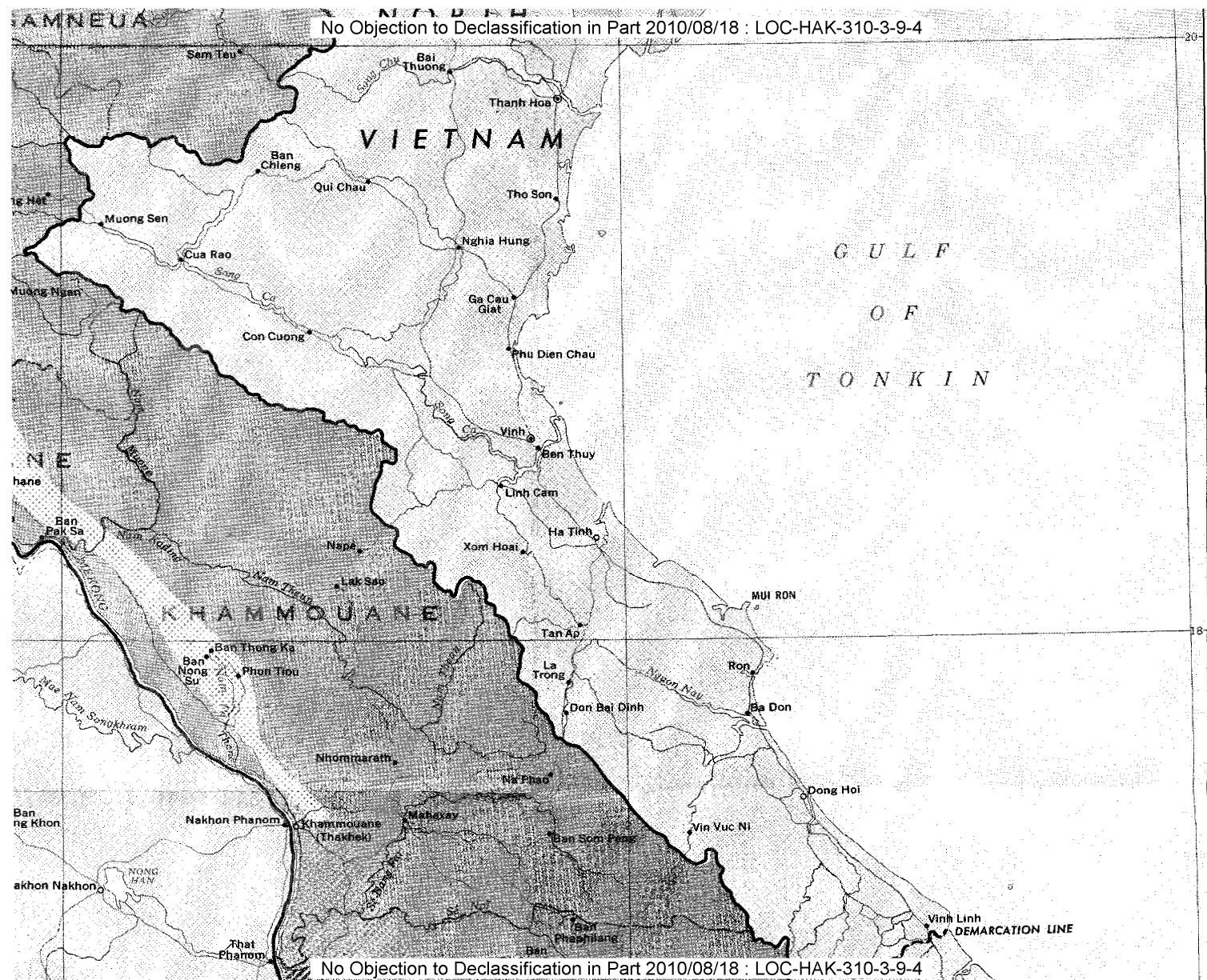
# THAILAND



Map of Laos showing provinces and neighboring countries (South Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand). Key locations include Vientiane, Savanavong, Phongsavan, and various rivers like the Mekong and Nam Ou. The map also shows the border with Thailand to the west and Cambodia to the south.

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CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Negotiating Scenario for Possible DRV Offer to Swap Prisoners for Withdrawal

In essence what this study does is provide a possible negotiating scenario -- starting with assumptions about the political/military situation; poses a DRV counterproposal to the President's May 8 proposal; suggests our "best" position response to this and then discusses our possible fallback positions.

A. These assumptions are made at the outset to set the stage for the scenario:

- So long as Hanoi holds our prisoners, US/GVN military pressures against NVN will continue at current or increased rates.
- At a minimum, these pressures will make it impossible for Hanoi to continue its invasion; at a maximum, they will destroy the military and industrial capability of NVN.
- The USSR and PRC will continue to provide NVN with military and economic aid, but will not take the extraordinary action required to totally offset U.S. military pressures.
- These circumstances will induce Hanoi to undertake new negotiating initiatives in the near future to bring U.S. air/naval activities to an early end in the North and South.
- The urgency to achieve this will force Hanoi to alter its basic position from insisting on both a political and military settlement to agreeing to negotiate the military elements separately, as envisioned in our May 8 proposal.

B. The study has selected the following possible DRG counter-proposal to our May 8 proposal. There are, of course, numberless possible counter-proposals, but the one chosen has all the elements needed for a full discussion on the options open to us.

- All U.S. forces will withdraw from South Vietnam within a fixed period of time.

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- All U.S. POWs will be returned within the same period, their release to proceed concurrently with the withdrawal of U.S. forces.
- The U.S. will cease all acts of force against both zones of Vietnam at the time an agreement is reached. The Vietnamese patriotic forces in the South will refrain from undertaking any hostile actions against U.S. forces as they withdraw.
- At the time of an agreement, the U.S. would provide some sort of guarantee against the resumption of acts of force to remain effective following the withdrawal release period.

C. The paper then discusses specific principles by which the the U.S. should be guided in its counter-proposal. The response, as an essential general principle, should be positive with a view to locking Hanoi into negotiations relating to the principles in our May 8 proposal and to maintain maximum U.S. domestic and congressional support. Specific principles for negotiating to provide best solutions are:

U.S. Withdrawal:

- Agree to total withdrawal of all forces, but try to retain a military assistance/advisory presence as in Cambodia.
- Seek a withdrawal period of approximately three months to avoid major disruptions of Vietnamization programs or negative impact on RVN morale, but sufficiently brief to prevent NVA forces from exploiting the stand-down and to satisfy U.S. public demand for early release of our POWs.
- Make clear that "withdrawal" applies only to U.S. forces remaining in South Vietnam and does not encompass military assistance to the RVN or any U.S. military forces outside Vietnam related to the Vietnam war.

Release of Prisoners:

- Seek the release of all U.S. prisoners prior to, rather than concurrently with, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Vietnam.
- Insist on a complete accounting of all MIAs.

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- Insist on effective international supervision of the release process (e.g., ICRC).
- Insist that release include all POWs, regardless of where they are held in Indochina.

D. U.S. Fallback Negotiating Position

On the assumption that Hanoi will reject our original counter-proposal, fallback provisions are discussed. Under the four areas for negotiating -- U.S. Withdrawal, Release of Prisoners, Cessation of Hostilities, and Guarantee Against Acts of Force -- various alternatives are discussed.

The paper's hypothesis is that NVN is interested in a swap, but not in a ceasefire even if unsupervised. Therefore, although it details our negotiating positions on a ceasefire, the paper does not specifically address the problem if the hang-up between us is over whether the ceasefire is unsupervised. Since the fallback does provide for us to accept the ICC -- despite its history of ineffectiveness -- as the supervisory authority, the effect is to suggest that we would require a general ceasefire in Vietnam, but that if necessary we would live with no effective supervision.

Even in the fallback position, the paper assumes that the USG would insist on keeping its right to resume the use of force after the POWs have been recovered, if NVN continues its infiltration.

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Critical Analysis

- The study underlines that the Communist forces already hold extensive sanctuaries, which the Cambodians cannot challenge. Thus, an accommodation, which would be useful to the NVA/VC in reestablishing the pre-April base areas, would have to include GKR willingness to attempt to close off the border to ARVN troops and to completely reverse its current political posture of cooperation with the United States, South Vietnam, and Thailand.
- It appears highly unlikely that the GKR could deliver on such an agreement. The most the GKR could do is to cancel cooperative border agreements with the GVN, forbid ARVN across border operations and attempt to focus international attention on future GVN border penetrations. Given the history of the allied cross border operations in April-June 1970, Lamson 719 and ARVN's almost continuous operations in southern Cambodia during the last two years, neither the North Vietnamese nor the GKR would be likely to expect that a formal closing of the border would cause ARVN to remain in South Vietnam.
- Lon Nol probably understands that we hold most of the cards, which alone should restrain him. There are possible options open to the U.S. which could be carried out individually or two or more simultaneously depending on the circumstances if he should choose to accommodate with Hanoi. For instance, we can point out forcefully to Lon Nol that we are aware of rumors of an accommodation which would be contrary to our interests; at the same time, we would explain that we did not intend to attempt to restrain ARVN from military action in Cambodia.

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Critical Analysis

- The study does not offer much hope of effecting counteractions should Hanoi attempt to use POWs as hostages. The study notes that Hanoi in 1966 drew back from talk of trying our POWs as "war criminals" in the light of world opinion. Only once, in 1967, do we know it placed POWs at potential targets. Recently, Hanoi has played down the "war criminals" theme. Especially in recent weeks, it has been broadcasting POW statements of the threat of bombing to them, but it has not said where they are, and so far it does not seem to be planning a serious effort to cause us to avoid bombing specific targets by using the POWs as hostages.
- The study lists and minimizes the likelihood of flamboyant use of the POWs by Hanoi. It lists several less dramatic and more likely measures: announcement of the deaths of POWs in bombing raids; putting the POWs in "safety zones" and calling for our observance of them; cutting their mail.
- On the military side, the paper notes that international law admits of proportionate retaliation, but details are not given. The effectiveness of retaliation in protecting the prisoners from use as hostages is questioned, and it would be counterproductive if Hanoi had not admitted their use as hostages.
- Probably our best hope for preventing Hanoi from using our POWs for hostages is the anticipated unfavorable reaction of world opinion to this type of tactic.
- The possibility is mentioned that Hanoi might indicate that it intended to send the prisoners through the mine-fields by ship, but the only proposal is that we recommend alternative ways of repatriating them. The fact is that, whether or not Hanoi adopted this particular strategem, it would undoubtedly demand the clearing of the mines in any settlement.

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